

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 078458

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, HA

SUBJECT: ANDERSON COLUMN REPORTS ASSERTION THAT CIA ATTEMPT-
ED FRANCOIS DUVALIER ASSASSINATION

1. JACK ANDERSON'S "WASHINGTON MERRY-GO-ROUND" CARRIED
IN THE WASHINGTON POST OF APRIL 7 REPORTED SUBSTANCE OF
DEPOSITION PURPORTEDLY GIVEN BY DR. ROBERT PRITCHARD TO
THE SPECIAL COMMISSION INVESTIGATING THE CIA HEADED BY
VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER. PRITCHARD, DESCRIBED AS "A
PROMINENT AMERICAN CONCERT PIANIST WHO HAD BECOME A CON-
FIDANT OF THE HAITIAN DICTATOR," ALLEGES TWO CIA-BACKED
ATTEMPTS AGAINST DR. DUVALIER.

2. IN THE FIRST OF THESE, THE AGENCY IS SAID TO HAVE TRIED
TO RECRUIT HIM FOLLOWING HIS "FALL FROM FAVOR" IN 1966 WHEN
HE "DEFIED AN ORDER FROM PAPA DOC AND GAVE A FORBIDDEN
PUBLIC CONCERT (SIC)." THE STORY CONTINUES, "A CIA-PAID
AGENT POSING AS A PHOTOGRAPHER APPROACHED PRITCHARD ABOUT
SLIPPING A DEADLY POISON INTO THE DICTATOR'S FOOD. THE
PIANIST RELATES THAT HE SAW THE LETHAL POISON IMMEDIATELY
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PAGE 02 STATE 078458

PARALYZE A SMALL, MOUSE-LIKE CREATURE, WHICH THE AGENT

CARRIED IN A CAGE." PRITCHARD TURNED DOWN THE CIA AND
"REPORTED THE PLOT TO A U.S. POLITICAL OFFICER IN HAITI"
WHOSE ALLEGED RESPONSE WAS,"WOULDN'T ANYTHING BE BETTER

THAN THIS SITUATION?" PRITCHARD REPORTEDLY INFORMED DR.
DUVALIER WHO WAS "AWARE OF THE SCHEMING AGAINST HIS LIFE."

3. SECOND "CIA-BACKED" ATTEMPT ON DUVALIER CITED BY
PRITCHARD WAS MAY 1968 BOMBING ATTACK ON THE PRESIDENTIAL
PALACE BY A LONE B-25 BOMBER WHICH DROPPED BOMBS AND
LEAFLETS. SOURCE FOR PRITCHARD'S INFORMATION THAT THIS,
TOO, WAS "CIA-ORIGINATED" IS IDENTIFIED AS ARTHUR BON-
HOMME, FORMER HAITIAN AMBASSADOR TO WASHINGTON.

4. COMMENT: DEPARTMENT WILL ADHERE TO GENERAL POLICY OF
NOT COMMENTING ON ALLEGATIONS CONCERNING CIA OPERATIONS.
NO QUESTIONS WERE ASKED AT APRIL 7 NOON PRESS BRIEFING.
THERE ARE OBVIOUS INCONSISTENCIES IN PRITCHARD/ANDERSON
STORY. IF PRITCHARD HAD INDEED ALREADY FALLEN FROM GRACE,
HE OBVIOUSLY WOULD NO LONGER HAVE HAD ANY GUARANTEED
ACCESS TO DR. DUVALIER. THE STORY OF THE MOUSE IN A CAGE
ADDS ADDITIONAL ELEMENT OF ABSURDITY. AS FOR THE BOMB-
ING INCIDENT AMBASSADOR BONHOMME UNLIKELY TO BE PRIVY TO
ANY CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION EXCEPT FROM HAITIAN SOURCES.
MOREOVER, DR. PRITCHARD APPARENTLY HAS A HISTORY OF IN-
GRATIATING HIMSELF WITH FOREIGN BLACK LEADERS AND INVOLV-
ING HIMSELF IN THE INTERNAL POLITICAL AFFAIRS OF THEIR
GOVERNMENT. AN EMBASSY REPORT, A-312 OF JUNE 16, 1968,
TOLD OF DR. PRITCHARD'S INTENDED PARTICIPATION, AS DIREC-
TOR, IN A "NEW WORLD FESTIVAL" UNDER GOH SPONSORSHIP.
THIS WOULD INDICATE THAT PRITCHARD HAD NOT AS OF THAT
TIME, FALLEN OUT WITH DR. DUVALIER. THE EMBASSY COMMENT-
ED, "WHILE APPARENTLY AN ARTIST OF SOME TALENT, PRITCHARD
DOES NOT OTHERWISE HAVE A GOOD REPUTATION IN PORT-AU-
PRINCE. HE HAS IMPRESSED SOME OBSERVERS AS BEING UNSTAB-
LE, AND IN 1966 REPORTED TO THE EMBASSY EXAGGERATED AC-
COUNTS OF CONTACTS HE CLAIMED TO HAVE HAD WITH THE ANTI-
DUVALIER OPPOSITION. WHEN HE LAST DEPARTED FROM HAITI
HE LEFT BEHIND HIM A STRING OF BAD CHECKS. INFORMATION
OBTAINED FROM RELIABLE EMBASSY SOURCES INDICATES THAT
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PAGE 03 STATE 078458

DUVALIER EVENTUALLY PAID ALL PRITCHARD'S OUTSTANDING
DEBTS." INGERSOLL

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